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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 000787

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TSA FOR SUSAN HASMAN AND VICKI REEDER

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAIR](#) [MX](#) [CMGT](#) [PINS](#) [PTER](#)  
SUBJECT: AVIATION COOPERATION CONTINUES, ICAO DEMARCHE  
DELIVERED

REF: A. 06 STATE 13518  
[1](#)B. 05 MEXICO 5213  
[1](#)C. 05 MEXICO 6052  
[1](#)D. 04 MEXICO 7837  
[1](#)E. 05 MEXICO 4419

Classified By: MINISTER COUNSELOR FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS JAMES T. HEG  
FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Embassy and TSA officials met February 7 with the Director General for Mexican Civil Aviation (DGAC) and other high level DGAC officials to discuss numerous aviation related matters including Bill Voss' candidacy for Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation

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Organization (ICAO), disaster/emergency preparedness, a MANPADS assessment, and aviation security related training. The DGAC was enthusiastic and open to working with the U.S. on these key priorities but as usual, they could not make any promises without the permission of other Mexican agencies. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) ECON Mincouns, Econoff, and TSA Rep for Mexico met February 7 with Director General of Mexican Civil Aviation (DGAC) Gilberto Lopez Meyer, DGAC Director of Security Major Aaron Villar, and Subdirector of Airports and Service Luis Bolado to deliver the ICAO leadership demarche and to discuss aviation disaster preparedness, a MANPADS assessment, explosives (IED specifically) training, and an upcoming meeting with TSA.

ICAO DEMARCHE

[1](#)3. (SBU) Econ Mincouns delivered the ICAO demarche (ref A). He told the DGAC that we are strongly considering supporting Roberto Kobeh for President and would like their support for Bill Voss as Secretary General. Lopez Meyer said he does not know what the official position of Mexico will be, but he spoke highly of Kobeh and said that he has a lot of respect for Voss and believes he is well-qualified. He noted that Voss and Kobeh would probably work well together and said ICAO needs good leadership and requires change. Lopez Meyer acknowledged that the Foreign Ministry (SRE) plays an important role in the decision, but suggested that Secretary Mineta call Secretary Cerisola to discuss the matter. (Embassy is sending a diplomatic note on Voss to SRE).

## DISASTER/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

14. (SBU) Econ Mincouns thanked the DGAC for their assistance during Hurricane Wilma and asked if the DGAC would support or host a conference for government and industry on aviation-related aspects of disaster preparedness. Econ Mincouns and Econoff explained the purpose of the conference would be to improve communication and coordination during natural disaster related emergency evacuations in tourist filled areas on both the west and east coasts of Mexico. Lopez Meyer noted that there are many different processes intertwined with the actual air evacuation of tourists and/or citizens and they are merely in charge of a small part of it. He emphasized that DGAC relies heavily on Mexico's Civil Defense (Proteccion Civil) and military counterparts to ensure those processes are completed beforehand. However, he said if he had more details on what could be discussed and come out of such a conference, he would be open to holding it. He had no knowledge of any upcoming regional disaster preparedness meeting in Mexico.

15. (C) Lopez Meyer emphasized that it is vital to get rid of the diplomatic note requirement in cases of aviation emergencies (ref B). He believes that if a natural disaster occurs, an aviation accident or large security incident, he has to be able to quickly call on his U.S. colleagues and depend on them not being delayed. He believes the SRE will not make it easy for this to happen and that we must establish some emergency bi-lateral protocol in writing. Econ Mincouns and Econoff told Lopez Meyer that more than a year ago the SRE stated that they only needed notification by e-mail or fax in emergency/immediate situations but they've continued to require a diplomatic note.

## MANPADS ASSESSMENT

16. (C) In a previous meeting with TSA, Lopez Meyer mentioned

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that he wanted all GOM Agencies to sign a document signaling their agreement and participation in a joint MANPADS assessment (Almost a year and a half ago, the GOM canceled a joint MANPADS assessment for Mexico City two days before the start date due to "political" sensitivities - ref D and E). Lopez Meyer admitted that he had not collected signatures yet but told his assistant to immediately schedule a meeting with other GOM agencies on the subject. He believes that an assessment in Cancun will not be possible due to the rebuilding efforts following Hurricane Wilma. He also noted that Mexico City may still be too politically sensitive at this time but mentioned the possibility of joint assessments at Tijuana and San Diego or even better at Ciudad Juarez and El Paso. Lopez Meyer seemed interested in the possibility of visiting a military training center near El Paso that specializes in MANPADS defense. He said the assessment would probably be easier to sell to other GOM agencies if the Canadians also participated (TSA had offered this at a previous meeting). He said that he wants to conduct an assessment before the July elections but said it may be politically easier to wait until after the elections.

## IED TRAINING

17. (C) The TSA Rep asked Lopez Meyer for the official request for IED (Improvised Explosive Device) training for personnel who are in charge of responding to credible threats of explosives found in baggage at airport checkpoints. Lopez Meyer signed the DGAC's request and gave it to the TSA Rep. Currently, in many Mexican airports, most security authorities with the exception of military have no idea how to respond to an IED threat. ATF and TSA jointly decided to offer the GOM training in Mexico, hopefully with the use of NAS funds. The Mexican Federal Preventive Police (PFP) and other federal law enforcement entities will be the recipient of the training.

UPCOMING TSA VISIT

18. (U) TSA Rep reminded Lopez Meyer that a TSA delegation from Washington would be arriving the week of February 21 to work on SPP related items and on Hold Baggage Screening. Lopez Meyer scheduled his meeting with them for February 23 at 10 a.m. Lopez Meyer also noted to Econ Mincouns that he hoped that current bilateral sensitivities regarding border incidents and the proposed immigration legislation would not get in the way of aviation cooperation. He noted that he will continue working with all of our agencies.

COMMENT

19. (SBU) Lopez Meyer clearly does not want the DGAC to get caught in the political crossfire. He remains sensitive to our concerns but admits that he lacks influence over the SRE on both the ICAO vote and on some security matters. He is open to the idea of sponsoring a meeting between public and private aviation officials on disaster preparedness but wants to ensure that there is a clear purpose to the meeting and wants to ensure that it doesn't encroach on the responsibilities of Civil Protection or other Mexican authorities.

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